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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 052832

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TAGS: [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#)
SUBJECT: SUBJECT: SOMALIA: TFG FOREIGN MINISTER CALLS ON AF

Classified By: E.O. 12958, A/S J Carson

11. (C) SUMMARY. Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Omaar (ForMin) met with Bureau for African Affairs (AF) Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson (A/S) on May 15. The ForMin and A/S discussed recent fighting in and around Mogadishu and TFG efforts to repulse these attacks. On May 18, the ForMin met with AF Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Phillip Carter (PDAS). The ForMin and PDAS further discussed the violence and situation on the ground in Somalia, and the ForMin requested additional weapons, ammunition and vehicles. END SUMMARY.

A/S Carson's Meeting with ForMin Omaar on May 15

12. (C) In their May 15 meeting, A/S Carson and the ForMin reviewed the situation in Mogadishu. ForMin Omaar described the initial phase of the fighting, which took place May 6 to 8, as promising because the TFG forces were able to push al-Shabaab and Hizbul al-Islam forces out of Mogadishu. The following Sunday, May 10, the Islamist militias regrouped and launched an all-out attack on TFG forces in the city. The ForMin lamented the defection of militia leader Yusuf Muhammad Sioyad Indha Adde and his forces, who switched sides in the fighting from the TFG to al-Shabaab. (Note: Indha Adde and his forces switched back to the TFG on May 17. End Note.) Omaar said it was these forces' decision to switch sides early in the fighting that disrupted part of the front, forcing the TFG to regroup.

13. (C) ForMin Omaar stressed his concern about foreign fighters participating in the fighting and leading groups against the TFG. Fighters from Chechnya, Bosnia, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as individuals from Canada, the U.S. and U.K., were fighting against the TFG, he said. There were also a number of Sudanese, Kenyans and Eritreans. All told, there were about 300 to 350 foreign fighters in Somalia according to his information. Despite the presence of these fighters and the initial setbacks for the TFG, the ForMin said the TFG was confident and beginning offensive action against the insurgents.

14. (C) ForMin Omaar expressed concern about Hassan Dahir Aweys' support among the Hawiye/Haber Gedir subclan. The Haber Gedir support Aweys because there are no other strong Haber Gedir leaders within the TFG, and the Haber Gedir believe Aweys is their best chance for representation in the government. Aweys was offered a ministerial position in the TFG about ten days prior to this meeting, which he rejected. The Haber Gedir are left without a good option to ensure their interests are represented. Nevertheless, the ForMin

stressed that the TFG would benefit if the fighting took on a clan dynamic. He said resources will be key to maintain alliances. He noted there were many men from aligned clans who were ready to fight on the side of the TFG, and that the TFG could increase their numbers to 10,000 if needed.

15. (C) A/S Carson asked ForMin Omaar if more could be done by President Sharif via media outlets. The ForMin said all radio stations are owned by ex-warlords and others who are critical of the TFG. He added that the Arabic language service of al-Jazeera was sympathetic to Hizbul al-Islam and other forces aligned against the TFG. ForMin Omaar asked if CNN could be more proactive in presenting other perspectives on the Somali crisis to the world.

16. (C) When A/S Carson asked how long TFG forces could maintain their hold in Mogadishu under current circumstances, the ForMin said two to four weeks (i.e., in the absence of additional funds and logistical support). ForMin Omaar believed that al-Shabaab was planning other assaults and to undertake another all-out push in Mogadishu.

17. (C) In response to A/S Carson's question about what could be done to stop the pipeline of support to the extremists, ForMin Omaar asked that everything possible be done to close the air-bridge with Eritrea. He brought a manifest of a flight from Eritrea to Somalia that he said proved the

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Eritrea connection to extremists. Flights were being conducted by a Kenyan contract airline called Capital Airlines. He asked that the USG put pressure on the Government of Kenya to have this company stop making these flights. He added three Antnov airplanes loaded with weapons, medical supplies, and munitions from Eritrea landed near Mogadishu April 28, May 1, and May 5.

18. (C) Concluding the meeting, A/S Carson assured the ForMin of USG support for the TFG and the Djibouti Peace Process, its opposition to attacks on the TFG, the presence of foreign fighters in Somalia, and any support to Hizbul al-Islam and al-Shabaab. He asked that ForMin Omaar stay in close contact with the USG to ensure good communication. The ForMin noted that the designation of al-Shabaab as a Foreign Terrorist Organization is now vindicated. He noted that Iraq committed \$5 million to the TFG, but had yet to deliver; he asked if the USG could push the Government of Iraq to release that money. ForMin Omaar ended by noting a need for equipment, including armored vehicles.

PDAS Carter's Meeting with ForMin Omaar on May 18

19. (C) The ForMin noted Al-Shabaab and allied extremists captured Jowhar, the capital of Middle Shabelle Region, on May 17, and asserted that the TFG would re-take Jowhar by May 19 before focusing on Mogadishu. After cordoning off Mogadishu, the TFG plans to reclaim opposition-controlled areas. According to the ForMin, the TFG blew up an al-Shabaab arms depot outside of Mogadishu on May 18. The ForMin also reported that al-Shabaab had moved a number of its fighters out of Mogadishu, Ras Kamboni leader al-Turki had gone back to Kismayo, and al-Shabaab leader Robow to Baidoa. At a meeting in Afgooye on May 15 or 16, al-Turki and Hizbul al-Islam proposed forming a joint organization with al-Shabaab; al-Shabaab, led by Afghani, rejected this idea, stating that other groups must become part of al-Shabaab and fully accept its leadership.

110. (C) ForMin Omaar confirmed Indha Adde's return to the TFG, noting that Indha Adde returned with 12 or 13 'technicals' and 130 to 140 troops. The ForMin said Indha Adde returned because al-Shabaab had sentenced him and 12 others to death because of their "pushing of a clan ideology" and not al-Shabaab's ideology. The ForMin said all 13 of

these people are Hawiye/Haber Gedir/Ayr.

¶11. (C) The ForMin said "there is no doubt that the TFG will hold Mogadishu, and (we) will now start taking the offensive." The ForMin requested weapons and ammunition, including RPGs, PKM and DShk machine guns, and mortars (60, 82 and 120 mm). The ForMin said the TFG currently has 3,500 in its National Security Force, and 2,000 police; an additional 2,000 to 3,000 men can be recruited if the TFG is provided with the requested weapons. PDAS Carter indicated to the ForMin that we would approach Uganda, Djibouti and Arab League states to provide equipment and other support. PDAS Carter emphasized that the U.S. can provide direct lethal assistance only as an emergency measure, and that the TFG must focus on a long-term effort. PDAS Carter added that the TFG needs to do a much better job with its communications outreach, and that its efforts to date have been "abysmal." PDAS Carter asked the ForMin to reach out to the Somalia Unit at Embassy Nairobi to begin to address this problem.

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